

Written Testimony Concerning Governor's Bill 6360 AN ACT CONCERNING
IMPLEMENTATION OF CONNECTICUT'S COMPREHENSIVE ENERGY STRATEGY.
Testimony of [your organization or business / your name]
Before the Commerce Committee

In **Support of**
HOUSE BILL 6650, AN ACT CONCERNING ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROGRAMS

Submitted by
Pippa Bell Ader, Westport
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Senator LeBeau, Representative Perone, and members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on HB 6650, AAC Energy Efficiency Programs.

I am pleased to support this bill. I am a member of the Westport's Green Task Force, and Chair of the Westport Home Energy Challenge. And this issue is dear to me. The Westport Home Energy Challenge is part of a DOE grant to promote Home Energy Solution visits and deeper energy efficiency upgrades. Westport has been very successful at promoting the program: We've had over 700 HES visits in a little over 2 years, and well over 100 energy efficiency upgrades, including insulation and solar installations. And 5% of the visits have been to income-eligible families. We wish this number were higher, but the process to be approved is arduous and slow.

I can speak personally to the frustration of not having a stable funding source for HES visits to oil-heated homes, which is 60% of Westport's homes. Ask any of the 20 partner organizations the Westport Home Energy Challenge works with how many times I sent out ominous emails, warning them that the price of the HES visit was about to skyrocket, or worse still, be unavailable to most Westporters.

When you cry wolf over and over to an audience, they do not forget. But unfortunately, what they remember is the doomsday call that went out, not the fact that the HES program is alive and well, and the best opportunity to improve your home comfort, reduce your energy bills and identify energy efficiency opportunities, with exclusive state rebates.

I would love to be able to tell the thousands offWestporters that I am in communication with, that a bill has been passed that assures consistent financing of HES visits for oil and propane heated homes.

HB 6650 establishes an Oil Heat and Propane Energy Efficiency Fund, to be supplied by a new excise tax on fuel oil and propane.

The tax will be phased in over several years and is small enough that it will not unduly burden customers. Besides, the average customer that has a HES visit will save many times the cost of the tax in just one year. We quote that the average home saves \$200 in one year, after having a HES visit. In Westport that savings is often much greater. We have plenty of homes that are older, or built poorly, that benefit greatly from simple measures such as caulking and air sealing, and updated lighting. At last count Westporters had saved close to \$300,000 in electricity costs alone. That does not include the heating and hot water savings!

The new Fund will plug into existing structures; it will be administered by the Fuel Oil Conservation Board, which will disburse money to the Energy Conservation and Load Management Fund for use in Home Energy Solutions and other programs.

The bill also requires that fuel oil and propane customers who receive aid from state programs have boilers or furnaces that meet or exceed federal Energy Star standards. These measures will allow oil customers to take advantage of programs that can save them hundreds of dollars a year while generating jobs in efficiency businesses and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

However, because fuel oil and propane customers do not pay into the efficiency fund via their heating bills, they have limited access to these programs. Last year's legislation provided a stop-gap measure, but that will soon expire.

Please don't make me have to send out yet another doomsday email. I really believe this affects people's attitudes about the HES program. And if funding does stop, what do I say to the 60% of Westporters who have oil heat? You no longer have access to one of the best programs in the country? You can't benefit from the cost-savings and pollution-cutting measures? This is particularly damaging to income-eligible families, who could use all the help they can get. There are plenty of such families in Westport.

HB 6650 offers a definitive solution by establishing a small surcharge to supply an oil efficiency fund. PLEASE VOT "YES" for HB 6650.